

The University of Chicago

THE SELECTION OF BOOKS FOR
COLLEGE LIBRARIES: AN EXAMINATION OF
CERTAIN FACTORS WHICH AFFECT
EXCELLENCE OF SELECTION

A PART OF A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED
TO THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE
LIBRARY SCHOOL IN CANDIDACY FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

1935

By
J. PERIAM DANTON

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THE study upon which this article is based constituted an objective analysis of certain of the processes, techniques, and other factors which play a part in book selection for the libraries of a restricted group of liberal arts colleges—those whose libraries possess fewer than 50,000 volumes.¹ The purpose of the study was to determine whether any of the processes or practices of book selection affect quality of selection, and, if so, how. The investigation was designed, therefore, primarily to answer the questions: "Does the presence of certain factors of book selection tend to result in satisfactory book collections, and the absence of such factors make for unsatisfactory ones? If so, what are those factors?"

The study was thus an effort to describe, for the benefit of administrators and librarians, certain criteria for judging the quality of book selection in four-year liberal arts colleges. The increasing importance of the rôle of the college library in the educational process emphasizes the need for adequate book collections.² The changing trends in education continue to place additional burdens on the library as regards the collection, organization, and dissemination of materials. The college library today must supply its faculty with materials for instruction and re-

¹ J. Periam Danton, "The Selection of books for college libraries: An examination of certain factors which affect excellence of selection." Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Graduate Library School, University of Chicago, June, 1935.

² See Floyd W. Reeves and John Dale Russell, "The Relation of the college library to recent movements in higher education," *Library quarterly*, I (January, 1931), 57-66; Floyd W. Reeves, John Dale Russell, et al. *The Liberal arts college* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1932), pp. 146 ff; William M. Randall, *The College library* (Chicago: American Library Association and University of Chicago Press, 1932); William Warner Bishop, "Our college and university libraries. A survey and a program," *School and society*, XII (September 18, 1920), 205; and Louis Round Wilson, "The Emergence of the college library," *Bulletin of the American Library Association*, XXV (September, 1931), 439-46.

search; it must provide the student with books for collateral and "background" reading, as well as with general reference and bibliographic tools, and it is called upon to supply the student with materials for recreational or voluntary (i.e., extra-curricular) reading. One of the important assumptions upon which this study rests is that the excellence or inferiority of college-library book collections is due, in large measure, to the manner in which the books are selected, including the amount of time spent in selection, the apparatus used, the persons or agencies responsible, etc. In other words, a good collection is partly the result of certain factors related to the book-selecting process.

The fact that there exist, in the literature of the library profession, no criteria for evaluating the techniques now used in building up college-library book collections would seem to justify the present attempt to arrive at such standards. The need for these standards was clearly felt by the Advisory Group on College Libraries which, during 1929-32, recommended to the Carnegie Corporation the making of grants to college libraries for their book collections. The *List of books for college libraries*³ was compiled to meet, in some measure, the need for objective criteria. Lists of books—however excellent in themselves and however carefully compiled—are, of course, rigid in structure and soon become out of date; being retroactive rather than prospective, they are of no help in the future selection of current books; they offer no principles for the selection of books; and they assume, as far as their use is concerned, that the various book needs of all libraries to which they are applied will be very nearly the same. The existing literature on various aspects of book selection discusses the ways in which books are at present selected, treats of the necessity for supplying student needs, presents lists of "best books," gives sources for the purchase of books, and deals with problems of co-ordination, book-buying (in contradistinction to book selection), and similar topics. What apparently is needed, and what this study aims to supply, is a presentation of the factors, which, when present, result in satisfactory book selection.

³ Charles B. Shaw, *A List of books for college libraries* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1931). This work will also be referred to as the "Shaw List."

SOURCES AND COLLECTION OF THE DATA

The two principal sources upon which was based the selection of the colleges to be studied were (1) the data on college libraries collected from 1929 to 1932 by Professor William M. Randall for the Carnegie Corporation Advisory Group on College Libraries and (2) *A List of books for college libraries*, edited by Charles B. Shaw. Mr. Randall's data constitute a reliable sample for all college libraries, and Mr. Shaw's *List* has been shown to be a valid relative measure of small-college-library book collections.⁴

The variables of size of collection, amounts of money spent for books, and annual accessions per year are, for the whole range of college libraries in the country, so great and of such influence in the number and kind of books held by these libraries as to make controlled comparison between all liberal arts college libraries impossible. The effect of these variables was eliminated in two ways: The first of these was by restricting the study to libraries having fewer than 50,000 volumes; these libraries all made annual expenditures for books of less than \$8,400 and had annual accessions of less than 3,050 volumes. The second means for the elimination of these factors was the use of a regression equation by which a predicted, theoretical percentage of holdings from the Shaw *List* was obtained by holding constant the variables of size of collection and average accessions per year (which includes amounts spent for books).⁵ The actual percentage of holdings from the *List*, divided by the predicted percentage, gives an index-number which represents the relative quality of book selection. The eleven libraries with the

⁴ For a fuller treatment of these two points and of the paragraphs which follow, see Danton, *op. cit.*, pp. 17-43.

⁵ For several reasons periodicals were not included in the study. In the first place, periodical holdings were omitted from the tabulations of total holdings constituting a part of Randall's data, some use of which was made in the present study. In the second place, the number of periodicals included in the Shaw *List*, use of which was also made, was so small as to have made no difference in the percentage of books held by the colleges in any case; and if a retabulation to include periodical holdings had been attempted, any conclusions based on so few data would almost inevitably be open to grave suspicion. Finally, and more important, it was felt that the periodical question in college libraries was a somewhat special one, and in several significant respects, notably that of continuation, quite separate from that of books. Consequently, the inclusion of periodicals might have been confusing rather than helpful.

highest, and the thirteen with the lowest, index-numbers were studied in an effort to determine what factors caused the differences. The libraries (eighty-six, in all) to which the regression equation was applied are connected with institutions in twenty-nine states representing each of the nine geographical divisions recognized by the United States Census Bureau. Men's, women's, and coeducational colleges were represented.

It is recognized that the exclusion from the study of libraries having more than 50,000 volumes and larger annual accessions and greater annual expenditures for books than those mentioned above eliminated many, if not most, of the best liberal arts college libraries of the country. However, within the designated class of libraries there is apparent a wide difference between the "high-index" and the "low-index" libraries—that is, between the libraries exhibiting the most-satisfactory and the least-satisfactory book selection. This difference exists in spite of the fact that the variables just mentioned are comparable for the two groups, and it is very much greater than such differences as exist between the two with respect to those variables. It may be added that all but two of the high-index group held accreditation from the American Association of Universities; only three of the low-index group did so. The present study investigates the factors which go to make up the spread between the two groups, while recognizing, first, that other libraries, not included in the study, may be better from the point of view of book selection than the best of those which are included, and that, as a consequence, the differences between very good and very poor selection for all colleges would in all probability be much greater than the differences presented in this study.

There is an additional point of considerable educational significance which may be mentioned in this connection. Of the more than 820 universities, colleges, and professional schools in the United States, over 580, or a trifle over 70 per cent, have libraries of less than 50,000 volumes. The percentage would probably be about the same, or slightly higher, for liberal arts colleges alone, since the elimination of the universities, with their generally larger collections, would be compensated for by the elimination of the professional schools, which generally have

small libraries.⁶ This means that a large number—certainly over 50 per cent, and possibly approaching 70 per cent—of the students in liberal arts colleges are in institutions having libraries of less than 50,000 volumes. From an educational point of view, therefore, it is quite as important to study the smaller of our college libraries as the larger. It is not as though the liberal arts college library of less than 50,000 volumes were the exception; on the contrary, colleges having libraries of this size are responsible for the education of a large proportion of all the students attending liberal arts institutions.

The study attempted to determine the reasons for the differences between the high-index and the low-index libraries, and for this purpose data on the processes of book selection for the libraries and data on certain factors regarding the persons who do the selecting, were collected. This was done largely by means of questionnaires, correspondence, and personal visits. Information secured in the three different ways showed extremely high consistency. The percentage of returns from the librarians was perfect; the returns from the faculty members in the institutions were over 60 per cent—72 per cent from the high-index group and 47 per cent from the low-index one. Over 87 per cent of the faculty members replying gave their names, although they were not specifically requested to do so. Many submitted explanatory or supplementary material—often at considerable length. These facts point to the reliability and representativeness of the returns and indicate that a majority of those from whom information was secured were conscientious and thoughtful in their replies.

FINDINGS

Preliminary study revealed two differences between the high-index and the low-index libraries. The first of these had to do with the conditions under which the book appropriations were made. It was found that (1) the recommendations of the librarians as to the needs of the libraries' collections as a whole were given consideration in all of the high-index libraries but in only about half of the low-index ones; (2) the appropriation of

⁶ Of the 205 institutions included in Randall's study, 80 per cent have libraries of less than 50,000 volumes.

departmental book funds was made on the basis of need in a majority of the high-index libraries and on some fixed, arbitrary basis in a majority of the low-index ones; and (3) unexpended portions of the book funds did not revert to the general college budget in the high-index group but did revert in the case of most of the libraries in the low-index one. In these respects the high-index libraries have a potential advantage so far as book selection and the building-up of book collections are concerned.

The second of the two differences just mentioned was the very considerable turnover among the librarians of six of the thirteen low-index libraries. This fact suggests the possibility that, even granting an intelligent, consistent, long-time policy of book selection, the interruption of any such policy, which must inevitably accompany frequent change in the library administrative personnel, is potentially detrimental to good book selection.

The main findings divide themselves logically into two parts: the first concerned with book selection as related to the librarians, and the second with selection as related to faculty members.

LIBRARIANS AND BOOK SELECTION

Table I shows in consolidated form certain of the findings regarding the librarians and the library administration of the high- and low-index libraries. From the first item of this table it will be seen that the librarians of the high-index libraries have, as a group, somewhat superior general education; from the second item it may be noted that nine of the high-index group had at least the generally accepted standard of one year of professional education but that only one of the low-index group had as much as this. Eight of the thirteen librarians in this group had no professional education whatever. Item 3 of Table I shows that the librarians of the high-index libraries had, on the average, more years of experience in college and university as well as in other libraries. Only two of the librarians of the low-index group had had any previous library experience when they were appointed to their present positions. The wisdom of a policy which permits such a situation seems highly debatable unless it is assumed that experience is a worthless commodity.

TABLE I
DATA CONCERNING THE LIBRARIANS AND CERTAIN FACTORS
RELATED TO BOOK SELECTION IN THE HIGH-INDEX
AND LOW-INDEX LIBRARIES

Factor	High-Index Libraries	Low-Index Libraries
1. General education of the librarians (11 high index, 13 low index):		
<i>a</i>) Ph.D.	1	0
<i>b</i>) 5 years of college or M.A.	2	3
<i>c</i>) 4 years of college or B.A.	8	6
<i>d</i>) Less than 4 years of college.	0	4
2. Professional education of the librarians (11 high index, 13 low index):		
<i>a</i>) More than 1 year.	2	0
<i>b</i>) 1 year.	7	1
<i>c</i>) Less than 1 year.	0	4
<i>d</i>) None.	2	8
3. Mean number of years of experience of the librarians (11 high index, 13 low index):		
<i>a</i>) In college and university libraries.	2.6	1.0
<i>b</i>) In other libraries.	2.4	0.79
<i>c</i>) In (<i>a</i>) and (<i>b</i>) combined.	5.09	1.79
4. Function of the library committee (10 high index, 11 low index):		
<i>a</i>) Apportionment of the book budget. .	6	9
<i>b</i>) Advisory function only.	9	2
<i>c</i>) Administrative function.	0	9
<i>d</i>) Book selection:		
Curricular books.	0	7
Non-curricular books.	2	8
Reference books.	0	6
None.	8	2
5. Chief book-selection responsibility of the librarians (11 high index, 11 low index):		
<i>a</i>) Reference books.	11	6
<i>b</i>) Non-curricular books.	11	6
<i>c</i>) Systematic growth of the library.	11	4
<i>d</i>) None.	0	3
Frequency of book selection of the librarians (11 high index, 11 low index):		
<i>a</i>) Daily.	4	0
<i>b</i>) 1-4 times a week.	6	2
<i>c</i>) 1-3 times a month.	0	3
<i>d</i>) 1-3 times a semester.	1	1
<i>e</i>) Once a year.	0	1
<i>f</i>) Never.	0	2
<i>g</i>) No estimate.	0	2
7. Time spent in book selection by the librarians (11 high index, 11 low index):		
<i>a</i>) 2 hours a day or more.	0	0
<i>b</i>) 1-2 hours a day.	4	1
<i>c</i>) 1 hour a day.	3	0
<i>d</i>) 1-4 hours a week.	4	3
<i>e</i>) 1-3 hours a month.	0	3
<i>f</i>) 1-3 hours a semester.	0	0
<i>g</i>) None.	0	2
<i>h</i>) No estimate.	0	2

The burden of proof appears to rest with those who have, consciously or unconsciously, acted upon that assumption.

The chief difference between the two groups apparent from the fourth item of Table I is that in a majority of the low-index libraries the library committee functions as an administrative body and as a book selection agency, whereas it does not so function in the high-index institutions. It is unfortunately impossible to measure what effect, if any, the designation of administrative authority to a library committee might have upon the book-selection activities and book collections of the library. It seems safe to say, however, that where, as is the case with most of the low-index libraries, the actual policies or administration of book selection (as well as of other matters) are at the mercy of, or in the hands of, a library committee, appointed from year to year, it is not likely that a consistent, far-seeing policy of book selection or of book collection building will be carried out. When, as one librarian admitted, it is the function of the library committee "to administer all the business of the library," it may well be asked why the college pays the salary of a librarian at all. Based on a wide experience in surveying liberal arts colleges, Reeves and Russell have maintained that "any arrangement whereby the librarian is made directly responsible to a committee of the faculty seems both unwise and unnecessary," and that the committee "should never be given direct authority to supervise the work of the librarian or to deal with the routine administration of the library."⁷ It seems probable that the inferiority of a number of the low-index libraries is in considerable measure due to a thoroughgoing violation of this principle.

Possibly of more direct importance for the present purpose is the fact that in nine of the eleven low-index libraries the library committee functions definitely as a book-selection agency. The extent of the committee's activity varies from the relatively innocuous one of passing on the purchase of large orders or sets

⁷ *The Liberal arts college, op. cit.*, pp. 159. See also in this connection, U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Education. *Survey of land-grant colleges and universities. The library* (Bulletin No. 9 [1930]), I, Part VIII, 652.

of reference books to cases in which the committee virtually does all book selection, the only outside intrusion being the hopeful submission of lists by department heads. The unsoundness of this general practice hardly needs to be pointed out.⁸ At most, a library committee meets once or twice a month; generally it meets two or four times a year. It is not to be expected that, during the meetings, anything approaching adequate consideration can be given to the scores or hundreds of titles which will come into question, or that faculty members will have the necessary time or incentive for such consideration outside of committee meetings. Even if they did, the committee members have neither the specialized knowledge outside of their own fields nor—what is more important—an intimate knowledge of the holdings and weaknesses of the library collections as a whole.⁹ If the librarian does not have this latter, no one will; and in that case, unless the college is willing to employ a librarian capable of gaining it and trained to select books, it probably matters little who does the selecting. The specialized knowledge of different subject fields can and should be provided by the faculty as a whole, who will thus co-operate in the selection of curricular books; the selection of reference and general reading materials should largely be left to the person employed, trained, and with the requisite time to do so; in both instances book-selection activity by the library committee is unnecessary, unwise, and an intrusion. The prevalence of library-committee book selection among the low-index libraries may not be an example of cause and effect, but it gives considerable indication of being so. The need for librarians competent and authorized to select books and to build up unified book collections has been noted before this,¹⁰ but the lack of such librarians has never before been so clearly associated with inferior book selection.

The data shown under Item 5 of Table I are to be expected in view of the findings presented in the preceding item. What is immediately apparent is that the chief responsibility for the selection of reference and non-curricular books is, in all of the

⁸ Cf. *The Survey of land-grant colleges and universities*, *op. cit.*, p. 652.

⁹ Reeves, Russell, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 167-68.

¹⁰ Randall, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

high-index libraries, in the hands of the librarians, whereas this is the case in only six of the low-index libraries. (The six are not the same for both classes of books; that is to say, in two of the six the librarian is responsible for reference but not for non-curricular books, and in two for non-curricular but not for reference books.) It is further apparent that in all of the high-index group, but in only four of the low-index group, the librarians are definitely responsible for the systematic growth and development of the library collection, and that in three of the low-index group the librarians have no chief responsibility for selection.

The colleges in which the high-index libraries are located have seen fit to delegate to their librarians most of the responsibility for the selection of reference and non-curricular books; this fact, coupled with the findings of students in the field of higher education, points strongly to the conclusion that the extent to which the librarian is thus responsible constitutes an important factor in the quality of book selection. Such a conclusion would obviously be open to criticism, though it might still be valid, if there were no probability that the librarians were able to make good use of this responsibility. In the present case it has been shown that the librarians of the high-index libraries have, as a class, better general and professional education than have those of the low-index libraries. Unless one is willing to say that these types of education are positively detrimental to book selection for college libraries, the conclusion seems justified.

Items 6 and 7 of Table I show data regarding the frequency of book selection and the time spent in selection by the librarians of the two groups of libraries. The data are, of necessity, approximations and must be so regarded. Librarians do not keep, nor could they be expected to keep, accurate statistics concerning their book selection activities; but it was felt that some difference might exist between the two groups and that even an approximate picture of the situation would serve useful comparative purposes. The data shown are of interest for such purposes.

Considering Item 6, and omitting the two cases for which no estimate was given, it appears that the librarians of ten of

eleven high-index libraries gave time to book selection one to four times a week or more frequently, and that in seven of nine low-index libraries selection was less frequent than this. There is, therefore, a very definite tendency for greater frequency of selection to be associated with the high-index libraries. The reason for whatever significance these data may have lies in the frequency of appearance and the volume of published aids to book selection, such as dealers' catalogs, the *Publishers' weekly*, the *Saturday review of literature*, and so on. If bibliographic and book-reviewing publications of this kind are not examined when they first arrive, they will accumulate so rapidly that they are likely to be neglected altogether or only glanced at *en masse* in cursory fashion. In either case the chances are great that useful titles will be overlooked. The book collection must almost certainly suffer if attention is given to selection less frequently than once a week.

Similarly, Item 7 shows that the librarians of the high-index libraries spent 1-4 hours a week or more in book selection and that only four of the librarians of the low-index libraries spent this much time; seven of the eleven high-index group spent 1 hour a day or more, whereas only one of the low-index group spent as much time as this. Again there is a fairly strong tendency for greater amounts of time spent in book selection to be associated with the high-index libraries. This is, of course, to be expected in view of the data shown under the preceding item.

The use of certain bibliographic and other tools is essential if the librarian is to know what books are being published and if he is to gain information about those books. Table II shows to what extent the librarians regularly use a selected group of general book-selection aids. This table is to be read as follows: seven of eleven high-index libraries and three of eleven low-index ones regularly use the *Publishers' weekly*, etc.

It is to be noted that the list includes only *generally* useful titles; special subject bibliographies and the like were omitted because, in the first place, their inclusion, to even a reasonably complete degree, would have resulted in a very long list; secondly, these libraries, with limited funds, serving small undergradu-

ate institutions, probably do not need, and in most instances would not have, the highly specialized sort of bibliographic apparatus; and, thirdly, a short list of the more important and generally useful aids would be more likely to bring out significant differences, if such exist, than would a longer one, for many items of which there might be only one or two checks.

TABLE II
USE OF BOOK-SELECTION AIDS IN ELEVEN HIGH-INDEX
AND ELEVEN LOW-INDEX LIBRARIES

Book-Selection Aid	High-Index Libraries	Low-Index Libraries
1. <i>New York times book review</i>	11	8
2. <i>Saturday review of literature</i>	11	5
3. <i>United States catalog and Cumulative book index</i>	11	10
4. <i>Book review digest</i>	10	8
5. <i>Shaw List</i>	10	5
6. <i>Bibliographies and reviews</i>	10	5
7. <i>Booklist</i>	9	5
8. <i>Publishers' weekly</i>	7	3
9. <i>Wilson Standard catalogs</i>	6	6
10. <i>English catalogue</i>	5	0
11. <i>Books abroad</i>	3	0
12. <i>New York herald tribune books</i>	3	2
13. <i>Whitaker's cumulative book list</i>	2	0
14. <i>Hester's Books for junior colleges</i>	1	0
15. <i>Bibliographie de la France</i>	0	0
16. <i>Hilton's Junior college book list</i>	0	0
17. <i>Wöchentliches Verzeichnis</i>	0	0
Total	99	57
Mean	9.0	5.18

No claim is made for completeness, even within these limits (e.g., the *Publishers' trade list annual* and the American Library Association *Catalogs* are not included); but most of the most essential tools (and a few others) are listed.

For the purposes of the present study, possibly the most telling disclosure of these data lies in the total and mean use of aids by the two groups. These are, respectively, for the high group 99 and 9.0, and for the low group 57 and 5.18. Obviously the listed titles are not of equal value, as they would have to be if these figures were to be considered in any sense absolute. Fur-

thermore, the collective item (No. 6), "Bibliographies and reviews," may mean much or little—it may mean, when checked, intensive daily or weekly search in a dozen publications for worth-while subject material, or it may mean the hasty and occasional scanning of two or three titles "on the chance of finding something." The item was included in the list for a general purpose and is counted at its minimum value as a single title. However, the differences in the use of tools by the two groups is apparent throughout the whole list and is decreased very little if one includes only the first twelve titles (omitting the lowest five which might be considered nonessential); the total and mean figures for the two groups then are: 96, 8.7; 57, 5.18. Even if the first ten titles only are reckoned with, the difference is not greatly decreased—in this case the comparable figures for the two groups are: 90, 8.18; 55, 5. It is apparent that the low-index group uses considerably fewer titles to aid in book selection than does the high-index group.

Further testimony to the truth of this statement is adduced from the fact that a majority of the high-index group indicated additional titles, such as the *Boston transcript* and the *London times literary supplement*, which were used as aids to selection; only two of the low-index libraries indicated any additional titles. It may likewise be seen that Items 10–14, the lowest five (omitting 15, 16, and 17, which were not checked by any of the libraries) received a total of fourteen checks from the high-index group but only two checks from the low-index one. Consequently, if the list were extended to include additional titles at this level, it is probable that even greater total and mean differences between the two groups would be disclosed. For these reasons, the present differences may be considered minimal.

Taking the list as a whole, the disparity between the two groups may be expressed statistically, by the standard error of the difference between two means, as $3.82 \pm .771$, the difference being more than 4.9 times the error. The chances are therefore better than 999 in 1,000 that the difference is a significant one.

The general conclusion that the libraries which are better from the point of view of book selection regularly use a significantly greater number of aids than do those which are poor in

this respect seems to have a close bearing on a fact already brought out, namely, that the librarians of the former group have considerably more professional training than do those of the latter. One cannot use a tool unless one has learned of its existence, and one cannot use it fully unless one has learned its special merits and defects. Our library schools give a certain amount of training in techniques, including those of bibliography and the fundamental apparatus of book selection. Although experience is a valuable teacher, the knowledge gained from it alone is frequently incomplete and faulty and, other things being equal, is rarely as well grounded as that which has a background of formal training. The librarians of the low-index group do not have, as a class, such training in anything like the degree that the librarians of the high-index libraries do. Consequently, they know less about fundamental bibliographic tools and use them less than do the librarians of the high-index libraries.

For the large-college or university library, having a number of full-time staff members, this might not be so serious, for the librarians of such institutions, frequently chosen primarily for their administrative or academic—as opposed to professional—qualifications, have professionally trained assistants to whom may fall the burden of carrying on the technical work of the library. But in more than half of the libraries under consideration, the librarian is the only full-time employee, and is the only member of the library staff at all likely to be professionally trained. Such book selection (and other professional) activities as are carried on within the library are, therefore, the task of the librarian, rather than of assistants. If the librarian is untrained for the adequate performance of these activities, the library suffers.

Several other facts of interest may be gleaned from Table II. One of these is that all of the high-index libraries use three of the listed titles; whereas no title is used by all of the low-index libraries. In like manner, seven titles are used by nine or more of the high-index group, but only one title has this distinction among the low group. At the other extreme, as already noted in

another connection, it may be seen that, omitting the three titles checked by no library, the lowest five titles were checked a total of fourteen times by the high-index group and only twice by the low-index one. It might be argued that these lowest titles are of little or no importance for small-college-library book selection, that in using them the high-index libraries were performing an act of supererogation, and that, consequently, their non-use by the low-index libraries signifies nothing. This may be true. On the other hand, it seems likely that part of the measure of the superiority of the one group over the other lies precisely in the extra aids, including the additional, unlisted ones, which were used to secure information about books.

FACULTY MEMBERS AND BOOK SELECTION

As a precaution against including information which might not apply to the period prior to 1930—the period of all of the earlier data—it was thought desirable to omit the returns of all faculty members who had become connected with the institutions since 1929. Thus, of the 444 blanks received, 126 were omitted for this reason; the returns from 7 other faculty members, who indicated that they do not select books, were likewise omitted. The total number of blanks omitted was therefore 133, leaving 311 returns upon which the discussions in this section of the study are actually based. In all that follows, reference to the percentage of blanks returned means, unless otherwise indicated, the number actually used—that is, 311.

As a matter of fact, the inclusion of the 126 returns from faculty members whose tenure began subsequent to 1929 would have made almost no difference in any of the results, but it would have been open to question on logical grounds.

The eleven high-index institutions have a total of 377 faculty members, and the twelve low-index ones a total of 361; the means are 34.27 and 30.08, respectively. Over 72 per cent of the faculties of the first group and over 47 per cent of the faculties of the second group returned blanks. Inasmuch as only seven of all the blanks indicated that their authors did not carry on any book selection activities, it may be said that the two figures just

given represent the minimum percentages of these faculties which select books. The figures would be somewhat, though possibly only slightly, larger if returns had been received from all faculty members, since some of those not reporting likewise select books; that the figures might not be much larger is indicated by the fact that many of those not replying were from the departments of physical education, practical music (i.e., voice and musical instruments), or military training—departments which require few or no books. Instructors in these departments did not, as a rule, return blanks, probably because they do not select books to any great extent.

The difference between the percentages of the faculties of the two groups of institutions which returned blanks seems to be of peculiar significance.¹¹ It can scarcely be argued that the filling-out of a questionnaire shows a lack of good sense, and that this difference consequently indicates a higher degree of intelligence among the faculties of the low-index institutions than among those of the high-index ones. Even granting the possible theoretical validity of this argument, the contention is not easily upheld in the present case, at least. The blanks were distributed to the faculty members with the co-operation and backing of the presidents of the colleges. By way of illustration, the president's note which accompanied each blank in the case of one college may be quoted in part:

I am sending you a blank which Dean Wilson of the Graduate Library School . . . is anxious for us to fill. . . .

Ordinarily I would not agree to ask you to fill a blank of this kind. I do feel, however, that there is so much need for an authoritative study in this particular field that we can afford to take the time to fill this blank. I will appreciate it if you will fill it and return it to. . . . We will collect them and send them to Dean Wilson. . . .

This is the sort of request that a faculty member, active and interested in book selection, and appreciative of its importance in the work of the college, would be unlikely to ignore. The presidents of all of the institutions co-operated in the distribution of the blanks in more or less similar fashion. It is therefore

¹¹ The difference between the means of the two groups is 24.35 per cent—over 2.75 times the standard error of 8.85 and over 4 times the probable error of 5.96.

believed that the returns from the two groups of institutions afford a fairly reliable indication, not merely of the extent to which the faculty members select books but—what is more important—of the extent to which they are interested in and concerned with book selection and its problems. If this is so, there is a very marked difference between the faculties at the two groups of institutions, and some suggestions as to the probable importance of this difference are pertinent.

It must be evident that book selection is no passive, self-motivating activity which can be accomplished by a pious wish and a wave of the hand; it requires time, knowledge, intelligence, and, above all, the will to do. This last cannot be over-emphasized; without it, the presence of the other factors is worth nothing. Randall¹² has implied the indispensability of the will to select books and of the need for faculties to be made conscious of the importance of book selection. The difference between the proportions of the faculties of the high- and low-index colleges returning the question blanks seems to indicate greater activity and interest in book selection on the part of the instructional staffs of the high-index institutions.

If this deduction is justified, what is its significance? Simply this: Other factors being equal (and these factors will be discussed presently), the more members of a college faculty who are definitely interested in the bibliographical aspects of their subjects, especially with respect to the library's book collections, the more chance there is that those collections will be adequately built up. The argument might be advanced that it is better to have a dozen highly trained and competent faculty members do all the book selection than to have it done by a score or two, some of whom are presumably less highly trained and capable. The answer to this is that the experienced head of a department, for example, whose field of interest and instruction centers chiefly around two or three aspects of a subject—and probably the more advanced aspects of that subject—may not be as well fitted as another member of the department to select books which concern the subjects or courses taught by the assistant.

¹² *Op. cit.*, pp. 101-2.

Any professor, whether head of the department or not, must, of necessity, be less of a specialist—bibliographically as well as otherwise—in some phases of his subject than in others. The man who best knows the field of colonial history may be the head of the department; but if it is not he, then whoever does know that field best should have a hand in the selection of its books for the library. Further, the young instructor, a few years removed from graduate study, may be able materially to build up the library's collections by the suggestion of titles which have been overlooked or the value of which has not been recognized by other members of the department. The suggestions of the instructor or assistant professor may rightfully be subject to the approval of the department head and the scrutiny of the librarian, but the possibility of a certain percentage—even though a small one—of usable suggestions makes it desirable that every teaching member of the faculty at least be alert for, and able and willing to suggest, a title which seems to him important or desirable. The fallibility of human nature suggests, finally, that even the most competent and experienced of professors may occasionally overlook or neglect to order a good title, and that the more members of the faculty there are who pay attention to the publications in the various subject fields, the less likelihood there is that a worth-while title will not be acquired.

The data seem to indicate that the foregoing considerations are less well provided for in the low-index institutions than in the high-index ones.

Table III shows certain facts concerning the faculty members of the two groups of institutions. The items of this table are to be read as follows: Item 1: 62 per cent of the faculty members of the high-index colleges and 72 per cent of the faculty members of the low-index ones were full professors, etc.; Item 2: 11.2 per cent and 19.6 per cent of the faculty members of the high- and low-index groups, respectively, held Bachelors degrees only, and so on.

Considering Item 1 of the table, it will be seen that full professors accounted for 62 per cent of the returns from the high-

index colleges and 72 per cent of the returns from the low-index ones. Below the rank of full professor more than twice as many

TABLE III

PROFESSORIAL RANK, HIGHEST EARNED DEGREE, AND CERTAIN DATA REGARDING THE BOOK-SELECTION ACTIVITIES OF FACULTY MEMBERS IN ELEVEN HIGH-INDEX AND THIRTEEN LOW-INDEX INSTITUTIONS

FACTOR	PERCENTAGE OF FACULTY MEMBERS	
	Institutions Having the High-Index Libraries	Institutions Having the Low-Index Libraries
1. Professorial rank (187 faculty members from high-index institutions, 124 members from low-index institutions):		
<i>a)</i> Full professors.....	62.0	72.6
<i>b)</i> Associate professors.....	14.9	2.4
<i>c)</i> Assistant professors.....	17.6	14.5
<i>d)</i> Instructors.....	5.3	8.9
<i>e)</i> Not given.....	0.0	1.6
2. Highest earned degree (178 high index, 122 low index):		
<i>a)</i> Bachelor's.....	11.2	19.6
<i>b)</i> Master's.....	51.1	50.8
<i>c)</i> Doctor's.....	37.7	29.5
3. Extent of co-operative activity in book selection by faculty members:		
Selection done:		
<i>a)</i> Alone only.....	14.4	17.7
<i>b)</i> Alone or in co-operation with others.	12.9	21.7
In co-operation with:		
<i>c)</i> Other members of the department...	48.1	41.9
<i>d)</i> Department head.....	28.6	12.1
<i>e)</i> Library committee.....	15.1	19.3
<i>f)</i> Librarian.....	46.4	49.1
<i>g)</i> Other departments.....	7.5	4.8
4. Frequency of book selection (171 high index, 106 low index):		
<i>a)</i> Weekly, or oftener.....	5.8	1.8
<i>b)</i> 1-3 times a month.....	15.2	9.4
<i>c)</i> 1-3 times a semester.....	61.4	47.9
<i>d)</i> Once a year.....	17.5	40.5
5. Time spent in book selection (158 high index, 89 low index):		
<i>a)</i> 1-4 hours a week or more.....	18.9	14.6
<i>b)</i> 1-3 hours a month.....	50.0	38.2
<i>c)</i> 1-3 hours a semester.....	31.0	43.8
<i>d)</i> Less than 1-3 hours a semester.....	0.0	3.3

faculty members in the high-index group returned blanks than in the low-index group, though there is no such difference as this between the total numbers of instructors in these classes for the two groups. The percentage of returned blanks which came from faculty members below the rank of full professor is 38 for the high-index group and 27 for the low group. From these data it is again apparent that there is a greater diffusion of book-selection activity and interest among the faculties of the high-index institutions.

This fact is still further emphasized if, in this connection, the omitted returns be considered. Of the 79 from the high-index group omitted because of date, 27, or 34 per cent, were from instructors; whereas of 44 omitted returns from the low-index group, only 10, or 22 per cent, came from this rank. These figures would cause the present difference in favor of the low-index institutions, under the division "Instructors" of Table III, Item 1, to be turned into a difference in favor of the high-index group. Below the rank of full professor the omitted returns from the latter were 77 per cent of the total, as contrasted with 47 per cent for the other group. The omitted returns are valid evidence in this respect only, of course, on the assumption that the degree of diffusion of book selection among faculty members appointed since 1929 is approximately the same as among those appointed prior to that date. There is no reason to suppose that this is not the case, since there have been no changes affecting this aspect of faculty book selection since the date in question.

Neither the figures which have just been discussed nor those of Item 1 of Table III show, though they may suggest, the fact that faculty book selection is in several of the low-index institutions almost exclusively, and in a majority of them very largely, in the hands of department heads. This is not the case among the high-index colleges. Generally speaking, the result is that in the latter the library's book collections are built up with the benefit of the help and suggestions of a much larger percentage of the faculty. It seems difficult to understand why a man who is considered competent to teach in a given field should not also be thought competent to select books in that field (though this is not equivalent to saying that bibliographical knowledge or

ability accompanies teaching competence). The relative lack of general faculty interest and participation in book selection in the low-index colleges seems to be a highly important factor in the difference between the two groups.

From Item 2 of Table III it may be seen that a little over 11 per cent of those selecting books in the high-index institutions held no degree higher than a Bachelor's, whereas in the case of the low-index institutions the comparable figure is over 19 per cent; 37.7 per cent of the high-index group and 29.5 per cent of the low-index one held Doctor's degrees. The difference in the percentages of those in the two groups who hold Master's degrees, which may be considered a sort of middle ground, is negligible. The other two differences merit consideration, especially when it is remembered that the data shown in Item 1 indicated a larger percentage of returns from those below the rank of full professor in the high-index colleges than from the same groups in the low-index ones. In other words, the relative lack of book selection on the part of the rank and file of faculty members in the latter group ought to mean that a relatively larger percentage of those from whom returns were received would possess higher degrees and a relatively smaller percentage would possess the Bachelor's degree only, since it is to be expected that more full professors than instructors and assistant professors will have the Doctor's degree. But, as shown in Item 2, the high-index institutions have, even so, a significantly larger percentage of Doctors of Philosophy who select books, and a significantly smaller percentage of members who have no degree higher than the Bachelor's.

Of and for itself, the possession of a Doctor's degree does not, of course, necessarily indicate superior ability in book selection, any more than it assures superior teaching ability or superiority in other directions, which has frequently been assumed. Two points can, however, be made. The first is that, although the lack of library and bibliographical knowledge and training among candidates for higher degrees has been shown,¹³ this lack is not as great among candidates for the Doctor's degree as

¹³ Cf. Peyton Hurt, "The Need of college and university instruction in use of the library," *Library quarterly*, IV (July, 1934), 436-48.

among first- and second-year graduate students. The second point is that the person who has received a Doctor's degree is almost inevitably better acquainted with the literature of his subject and with the tools necessary for finding out about that literature than is the individual whose knowledge in this direction is no greater than is demanded by an undergraduate major leading to a Bachelor's degree. In the light of these two observations, the faculty members selecting books in the high-index institutions have, as a group, a distinct advantage over those of the low-index colleges, and appear to be better equipped for book selection from the point of view of probable bibliographical knowledge, at least.

Item 3 of Table III shows the extent to which the faculty members select books alone and in co-operation with certain other persons and agencies, the purpose of these data being to determine whether there is any difference between the two groups in the matter of general co-operation in book selection within the institutions. Only the first two divisions of this table are mutually exclusive, which means that a faculty member may conceivably be counted in each of the other five; many faculty members actually do select books in co-operation with several persons or agencies.

On the assumption that co-operation in book selection is desirable, it will be observed that there is some difference in favor of the high-index institutions in every division except division *f*; the negative difference in division *e*—co-operation with the library committee—may be considered to be an advantage in favor of the high-index group since, in the case of the low-index one, the word "co-operation" is a euphemistic one, and actually means decisions by the committee as to book purchases.

The differences shown in this item become more marked if (1) divisions *a* and *b*, and (2) divisions *c*, *d*, *f*, and *g* are totaled, in which case it appears that (1) 27.5 per cent of the faculties of the high-index institutions, as against 39.5 per cent of those of the low-index ones, select books alone some or all of the time, and that (2) 131 per cent cases of co-operation occur in the high-index group, as compared with 108 per cent cases among the

faculties of the low-index one. Though none of the individual differences are great, they are, when taken together, appreciable. The individual figures have, of course, little, if any absolute value, not merely because the differences are in most cases small, but also because an isolated situation, such as co-operation with the department head, for example, could not easily be assumed to be an important factor. Considered as a whole, however, these data seem to indicate a somewhat greater recognition—whether conscious or unconscious—of co-operative principles of book selection among the faculties of the high-index than among those of the low-index institutions. This implies a greater interest in book selection and a greater willingness to go to some trouble in selection; it implies, also, more consideration of book selection in its relation to the building-up of a library collection which will be a unified whole rather than a collection of separate titles chosen solely because of the individual, unco-ordinated desires of separate faculty members.

Item 4 shows the percentage of faculty members who select books at various frequencies. The figures given by the faculty members are, of course, approximations only, and those shown are, for both groups of institutions, understatement of the actual frequency of selection. One of the reasons for this is that a number of professors indicated great frequency of selection, but did so in essay form; as these replies were not comparable with, and could not be fitted into, the quantitative classification, a number of the "best" replies had to be omitted. A second reason is that a number of faculty members understood "book selection" to be approximately synonymous with "book ordering," whereas the term was used in its library sense to include all of the processes, such as the reading of reviews, the checking of titles, and so on, which go into book selection; hence the replies in a number of cases pertain to a part, rather than the whole, of book selection. But the data of Item 4 represent more of an understatement for the high-index than for the low-index group, since a larger percentage of the replies of the former fell under one of the two points just mentioned.

Because the figures are understatements of actual conditions,

they have no absolute meaning or value; as bases for comparison between the two groups they are, however, perfectly satisfactory. From this point of view, the faculty members in the high-index colleges show a distinct superiority over those of the low-index ones, if it may be assumed that, other things being equal, frequent book selection is better than infrequent selection. This assumption is not difficult to support, for the volume and frequency of publications, even within highly specialized subject fields, is today such that fairly regular attention is required to keep up even with the current output. In each of the divisions of Item 4, the faculties of the high-index group of institutions make a definitely better showing than do those of the low-index group. It is not the purpose here to go into the possible reasons for the differences between the two groups in this respect, but it is pertinent to point out that the data unquestionably indicate a greater attention to book selection among the faculties of the high-index colleges. This may or may not mean a greater conscious interest in the libraries' book collections as such, but in any case the differences indicated must inevitably have an effect upon those collections.

In similar fashion Item 5 shows the percentage of the faculties in the two groups of institutions who spend given amounts of time in book selection. Again, the figures are approximations; and, for the same reasons mentioned in the preceding section, the data undoubtedly represent understatements of the actual amounts of time spent by faculty members in both groups of institutions. As before, the understatement is greater for the high-index group than it is for the low, so that an analysis of the complete situation would, in all probability, show considerably larger differences between the two groups than actually appear. While the figures have no absolute value, they are of interest for purposes of comparison.

In view of what was said in the last section regarding frequency of selection, it would naturally be supposed that greater amounts of time would be spent in this activity by the faculties of the high-index colleges than by those of the low-index ones. The figures of Item 5 show this to be the case, and further em-

phasize the fact that greater attention is paid to book selection in the high-index institutions; this must have its effect upon the book collections of the libraries.

As in the case of the librarians, an attempt was made to determine to what extent the faculty members in these institutions use bibliographic and other aids to book selection. The problem is somewhat complicated by the fact that the faculty member, unlike the librarian, needs, in general, to be on the lookout for books in a very few, usually allied, fields only, and by the further fact that a considerable portion of the information which he needs about books will appear in special-subject journals or other aids. It would have been impracticable to compile and use a check-list which would include the five or six chief journals in each of the twenty-odd collegiate departments of instruction, if for no other reason than that well over half of these libraries subscribed to fewer than 140 periodicals of all kinds—a figure which obviously includes many magazines having no book selection value; consequently, most of the professors simply do not have regular access to any considerable number of special-subject periodicals. As a substitute, and to permit some indication of the use of this type of publication, the first two items in Table IV were included. This table shows the number and percentage of faculty members in the two groups using each of the designated aids, of which only those checked by ten or more professors in one or the other of the groups are given. Although specialized material in the various subject fields was not otherwise provided for, it may be mentioned that several of the specific titles included in the table, such as the *United States catalog*, the *Booklist*, the *Book review digest*, and the *New York times book review*, are wholly or nearly universal in scope so far as the subject matter of the books considered in them is concerned. The general usefulness of such titles to the individual book selector, whatever his field may be, and the special usefulness of the more technical periodicals or other aids, included as two groups in the first and second items listed in Table IV, validate the use of the data shown therein for purposes of comparison.

The items listed are obviously not of equal value or importance, and the indicated use of one of them, or of "Published and periodical bibliographies" may mean anything from 5 minutes' scrutiny to 5 hours or more of careful checking. Similarly, the indicated use of "Reviews of books in field" may mean the painstaking, periodic reading of half a dozen specialized journals or the irregular and cursory examination of a single one.

TABLE IV
USE OF BOOK-SELECTION AIDS BY 187 FACULTY MEMBERS IN HIGH-
INDEX INSTITUTIONS AND 124 FACULTY MEMBERS IN LOW-INDEX
INSTITUTIONS

BOOK-SELECTION AID	HIGH-INDEX LIBRARIES		LOW-INDEX LIBRARIES	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Reviews of books in field.....	175	93.6	98	79.0
Published and periodical bibliographies.....	161	86.1	93	75.0
Dealers' catalogs.....	147	78.6	96	77.4
<i>New York times book review</i>	68	36.3	28	22.6
<i>Shaw List</i>	47	25.1	11	8.9
<i>Saturday review of literature</i>	42	22.4	12	9.7
<i>United States catalog and Cumulative book index</i>	40	21.4	23	18.5
<i>Booklist</i>	27	14.4	12	9.7
<i>Book review digest</i>	22	11.7	12	9.7
<i>Books abroad</i>	19	10.2	6	4.8
<i>New York herald tribune books</i> ...	18	9.6	1	0.8
Books examined in other libraries	12	6.4	3	2.4

In one sense, these considerations apply equally to both the high- and the low-index groups, and consequently do not impair the use of the data as a relative measure. From another point of view, these considerations are not equally pertinent for both groups, since it has already been shown that the faculties of the high-index colleges are not only more frequent selectors of books but also spend more time in book selection. It follows, therefore, that the indicated use of book-selection aids is more intensive, as well as extensive, for the faculties of the high-index institutions as compared with those of the low-index ones.

The most obvious and significant disclosure of Table IV is to

be seen from a comparison of the two percentage columns, which show that each of the items listed was used by a higher percentage of the faculties of the high-index group than of the low-index one. In nearly all instances the differences are large, and in the case of several of the items the percentage of use among the faculties in the high-index group was more than twice as great as among those of the low-index one. The differences in the use by the two groups of book reviews in specific subject fields and of published and periodical bibliographies are especially worth noting because these collective divisions are so broadly inclusive; the faculty member who pays no attention to the reviews of books in his field is probably not doing as much as he could in the way of book selection, unless the remote possibility is assumed that he has the opportunity to examine personally all of the important books published in that field.

From the data of Table IV it is clearly apparent that the faculties of the high-index institutions make greater use of book-selection aids than do those of the low-index ones. This observation is supported and, indeed, still further emphasized in two other ways. The first of these is the indicated use of titles on the question sheet checked by fewer than ten faculty members and hence not included in Table IV. The ratio of this use is nearly 4:1 in favor of the faculties of the high-index group, although the total number of returns from this group are only half again as many as from the low-index group. In the second place, the use of additional titles, which were mentioned by the faculty members themselves and were mostly specialized publications in specific subject fields, was well over twice as great in favor of the faculties of the high-index group of institutions. In the light of these two supplementary facts, and bearing in mind that these faculties spend more time in book selection and do so more frequently, it is safe to say that the actual differences between the use of book-selection aids by the two groups are, not merely great, but substantially greater than is indicated by the data of Table IV.

Two more or less incidental points in connection with this table are worth noting. The first is that the percentage of use of

the various items listed tends to be closely related for the two groups (correlation, by Spearman's formula based on rank differences, $= .995 \pm .002$), which means that there is a high degree of agreement between the groups as to the relative importance of the listed items and points to the usefulness of the list as a measure for comparison. The second is that for both groups of institutions the indicated use of the aids included in the first three divisions is very much greater than that of any of the others. It is probably to be expected that the collective items, "Reviews of books in field," and "Published and periodical bibliographies," would be of most importance for the faculty member concerned with book selection; but the fact that these two *are* collective items warrants the belief that the figures given for them represent a considerable amount of duplication. In other words, the figures given for these two on the one hand, and for some of the specific titles on the other hand, are almost certainly not mutually exclusive.

SUMMARY

The study shows, for the librarians of the high-index libraries, as compared with those of the low-index ones: (1) better general education; (2) better professional education; (3) somewhat more college and university (as well as general) library experience; (4) less administrative activity on the part of the library committee, especially as regards book selection; (5) very much more direct responsibility for book selection and particularly responsibility for the systematic growth of the libraries' book collections; (6) time more frequently given to book selection; (7) greater amounts of time spent in selection; and (8) greater use of more book-selection aids. Taken together, these factors, all of which must be admitted to have a potential effect upon book selection, appear to go far in accounting for the difference between the two groups of libraries.

In similar fashion, the study shows, for the faculty members in the colleges having the high-index libraries as compared with those in the institutions having the low-index ones: (1) a larger proportion of members concerned with problems of book selec-

tion; (2) a larger proportion of members who actually select books; (3) a greater amount of selection done by members below the rank of full professor; (4) better education; (5) greater departmental co-operation in book selection; (6) time more frequently given to selection; (7) larger amounts of time spent in selection; and (8) greater use of more aids to book selection.

Again, these factors, considered as a unit, seem unquestionably to justify a causal inference. Combined with the factors regarding the librarians, they are amply sufficient to account for the differences between the indices of the two groups of libraries.

The experienced educator or librarian, asked to name the non-material factors which contribute to good selection, would probably mention many or most of those which this study has disclosed. If so, he would be making shrewd guesses, but his observations could be little more than that. It is hoped, therefore, that the results of the present objective examination may be of value to the liberal arts college library in a way that the opinions of even the most respected and well-informed educator or librarian might not be.

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In connection with the section which follows, three considerations are to be noted. The first of these is that the differences disclosed in the study are not maximum ones; in fact, they might conceivably be found ranked toward the bottom of a scale which ranged from the most to the least satisfactory in book selection factors for all liberal-arts-college libraries in the country—assuming a controlled comparison between our best and worst college libraries to be theoretically possible. This is true because even among the best of the colleges and college libraries included in the study, few rank, in any of the factors which are commonly supposed to make for institutional excellence, with the finest of American colleges or college libraries. The colleges studied are similar in many important respects; if that similarity were less, and if the best of college libraries could be compared with the worst (rather than, as in the present case,

better with worse), the differences would undoubtedly be very much greater than those which the study reveals. From another point of view, the latter differences may not be considered maximum ones, since it has been pointed out that there is probably a greater actual spread between the high-index and the low-index institutions in certain respects than is shown in the formally presented data. To a certain extent, therefore, the recommendations implied in the data are to be thought of as minima rather than maxima.

A second, and absolutely essential, consideration is that neither good book selection per se nor the presence of any of the factors contributory to good selection will result in good book collections unless there are adequate funds for the purchase of books. Many of these libraries—possibly a majority of them—did not, even before 1930, have large enough book appropriations; reduced budgets since that time have resulted in still more unsatisfactory situations. Most of these libraries, however failing in the non-material factors which contribute to good book selection, would do better if they had more funds with which to work; this applies also to book selection by members of the instructional staffs.

A final consideration, which the writer records as a disclaimer, is that not all of the implications and recommendations which follow are original. A few have even been stressed over and over again by enlightened educators and librarians, but they follow so inevitably and so forcefully from the findings that it seems impossible to omit them here; possibly their inclusion in connection with the results of this study may serve to re-emphasize their importance and to hasten remedial action.

1. Before the college administrator can demand satisfactory book selection (or satisfactory performance in many other respects), it is incumbent upon him to make certain that financial support is adequate. There may have been a time when \$500 or \$1,000 or \$2,000 would buy all the books and periodicals which a college needed, but if so, that day is definitely past. If the administrator is wholly unable to provide adequate book (and other) funds for the library, he might better follow the advice of

some present-day educators¹⁴ and close his institution than attempt to continue with hopelessly inadequate financial support; the librarian may well concur in, or even urge, such a move, for he can scarcely be less well off than at present. The alternative of limiting or eliminating the departments above a presumed minimum and thus of better serving fewer departments would probably mean, in the case of the small college, that the institution would offer something less than a full liberal arts education.

2. Beyond adequate funds, what is most needed in many of these libraries, from the point of view of book selection, at least, is competent librarians—librarians who are aware of the place and value of books in the educational scheme, who understand their specific relation to the curriculum, who are equipped by training to find out about books, and who are willing to expend time and effort in doing so. The administrator will do well to consider that librarianship is no longer merely the custodianship of books, that its function is positively educational, and that it demands a person with certain well-defined attributes. Specifically, and based upon the findings of the present study, this means that, barring the exceptional circumstance, the administrator will be concerned to secure, if he does not already have, a librarian who has: (1) a college education; (2) a year or more of professional education; and (3) a modicum of college or university library experience.

The administrator should make certain that his prospective librarian has a knowledge of the purposes of the college, the curriculum, and the integration of the library with instruction. The administrator should also make it his business to find out how familiar and concerned with problems of book selection the librarian or prospective librarian is. When a suitable person has been secured, it should be made advantageous for him or her to remain at the institution long enough to develop and carry out—in co-operation with other members of the college personnel—a consistent, well-planned policy regarding the growth and function of the library.

¹⁴ Cf. e.g., John Dale Russell, "The College library as viewed by the administrator," *Library journal*, LX, No. 3 (February 1, 1935), 93.

3. To a capable, interested librarian the responsibility for a considerable part of book selection can and should be intrusted. This does not for a moment imply that the librarian should supplant the faculty member in the selection of books for course or other teaching needs. It does mean, however, that the librarian should be expected to question the omission of a possibly important title not asked for by the department of instruction concerned, or the inclusion of another title, if the library is already apparently able to supply the material; it does mean that the librarian should be the person chiefly responsible for the growth of the reference and general collections, and for the systematic development of the library's collections as a unified, correlated whole. All of this demands a high degree of co-operation between the librarian and the members of the instructional staff.

4. Under the conditions indicated above, a larger proportion of the book funds should be in the hands of the librarian than is now frequently the case. If departmental book budgets are to some extent accessible to the librarian for use in the purchase of books not requested by faculty members, or if the book budget is under the direction of the librarian and is not apportioned among the departments, this problem is solved. But if funds are divided among the departments, and if the departments themselves expect to spend every dollar of their appropriations, the librarian must be given a substantial sum from which to buy general and reference books—books which single departments cannot buy unaided, and those titles required to fill in gaps in the library's collections.

5. Preferably the library's book funds should not be inflexibly divided among the departments but, whether divided or not, should be kept sufficiently fluid to provide for the unexpected, expensive set or collection and an easy shift in emphasis as departmental or general library needs require. The practice of having unused portions of departmental or library book appropriations revert to the general college budget is indefensible in view of the fact that it gives neither the faculty nor the librarian any incentive to systematic or long-time planning and since it encourages last-minute, hurried, and unconsidered ordering.

6. Except in the case of a few of the colleges, all of which are in the high-index group, the faculty members as a class could be considerably more concerned with matters of book selection. The question immediately arises as to whether anything can be done to increase faculty interest and participation along this line. The answer may be in the affirmative. An artificial stimulus which seems to have been eminently successful was the grants given by the Carnegie Corporation to a number of college libraries for the purchase of books. Eight of the libraries included in this study received such grants. There is no doubt whatsoever that the increased opportunity and the possibility of being able to fulfil old needs and desires which these grants provided were of great direct benefit to the colleges. But the grants were possibly of even greater indirect value in focusing the attention of the faculty members (and librarians) upon the libraries' collections in an entirely new way. With funds available above and beyond the immediate and essential needs, the personnel concerned with book selection in these colleges was encouraged to plan and to undertake a certain amount of systematic development; more faculty members took a more active interest in book selection, and, in general, the library and books, in their relation to the educational process, became matters of more widespread concern.

There are obviously few occasions on which the college administrator is in a position to provide or secure exactly this sort of stimulus. A plan which ought to bring somewhat the same results and which does not carry with it the discouraging aspects of limited, temporary grants has been suggested by Randall.¹⁵ In the face of highly restricted book budgets, some such plan, whereby the members of the faculty are encouraged—even forced—to give real consideration to the library's book collections, seems the only answer. There is little to fire the imagination or to encourage the formulation of a broad policy of development in a \$100 appropriation which will do no more than take care of the most urgent needs, if that. On the other hand, a department, or group of departments, having a considerable

¹⁵ *Op. cit.*, pp. 102-5.

amount to spend once every few years may well be induced to undertake a periodic survey of the library's resources in specific fields, to plan ahead for the year when there will be a substantial sum to expend, and to outline and maintain a program of systematic development.

Even when relatively large sums of money are, as is usually the case, quite out of the question, and when temporary grants for book purchases are not available, the administrator might consider setting up an annual special fund which would be allocated—say in the spring of each year—to the department or division submitting either the most conclusive evidence of need or the most thoughtful plan for development of the book collection along certain lines. The advantage of such a fund, however small it might be—and in many of the smaller liberal arts colleges it might not exceed \$50 or \$100—would lie in the fact that it would provide precisely that incentive to planning and planned growth which is now so frequently lacking. The possibility of winning an extra sum of money—a special award, so to speak—for use above and beyond the essential needs of the day's work would tend to keep the members of the faculty alert to book selection and departmental book collections, and would instil a healthy spirit of competition among departments. It might likewise help to indicate which departments were doing less than they could in matters of book selection.

7. Closely allied to the foregoing, and especially to the statement that the faculty members, as a class, could be more concerned with the bibliographical aspects of their subjects, is the question of faculty competence in book selection. An increase in this competence is obviously desirable and, equally obviously, easier to talk about than to get. The bases for the appointment of faculty members is probably at the heart of the matter and, if so, the administrator's task is not a simple one. The bibliographical training and ability of prospective instructors are certainly seldom, if ever, looked into, though they should be, if instructors are to select books, as they must. Evidence of teaching ability and experience are ordinarily demanded of the prospective teacher. There is no less reason for the administrator to

be concerned to know something of the prospective instructor's qualifications as a selector of books. If such qualifications were made one of the bases of appointment, it seems highly probable that there would be more and better book selection done by faculty members in our colleges; it is also probable that more attention would come to be given to bibliographical training in teachers colleges and other institutions of higher education.

8. Something for which there seems to be a real place is a book-reviewing and book-noting journal directed specifically toward the needs of the college and the college library. The American Library Association *Booklist* is a useful publication; but it is intended primarily for the small and medium-sized public library, and its annotations are neither critical enough nor full enough to be of much value in college-library book selection. The *New York times book review*, the *Saturday review of literature*, and other book-reviewing media of this class, however excellent for the general adult reader, seldom approach the book with the needs of the undergraduate student in mind. Furthermore, most of these book-reviewing publications are more or less limited by their clientèle to the more popular type of treatment and subject matter. At the other end of the scale are the technical journals, giving valuable judgments concerning the desirability of a book for the professor's personal library but generally restricted to the specialized work and certainly not designed to be a guide to the selection of books for undergraduate reading.

The financing of a monthly college book-list would offer some difficulty, for, even if all of the eight hundred odd higher educational institutions in the country were to subscribe, such a journal would probably not pay for itself. Another difficulty, and no doubt just as serious a one, would be that of securing a group of competent reviewers—reviewers not merely competent in subject fields but also thoroughly acquainted with the needs and capacities of students who pursue the various courses of the college curriculum. The *Shaw List*—the largest and most comprehensive of the book-lists designed specifically for college library collections—has been seized upon by the librarians of the small-

er liberal arts college libraries as a pilot in unknown and difficult waters. In spite of the difficulties entailed in the publication of a college book-list periodical, it seems probable that an authoritative journal of this sort would fill such a need and would be of such use as to justify considerable effort.

PROBLEMS FOR FURTHER INVESTIGATION

A letter to the writer from a college librarian implies that college librarianship will not profit by objective analyses of its problems, practices, and procedures—at least of such elementary ones as those of book selection. To those who may be inclined to take exception to this opinion the writer offers the following suggestions for further study:

1. The technique used in this study might be extended to other classes of liberal arts college libraries—for example, those of 50,000–100,000 or 100,000–150,000 volumes, or those within other fixed limits in annual expenditures for books, e.g., \$10,000–\$15,000. For such studies the regression equation could be, and might have to be, extended to take care of additional variables: size of staff (or number of staff members active in book selection), separate treatment for accessions and annual book expenditures, and so on; or the number of staff members concerned with book selection, and factors regarding the library personnel, might be left to appear as a part of the findings.
2. The technique might be extended to include the measurement of other aspects of college librarianship, as, for instance, service to users of the library. Some study would be necessary to determine whether this would be possible, especially in view of the difficulty of setting up valid criteria for judging service, and in view of the presence of the highly important, but somewhat unmeasurable, personal factor. Nevertheless, the college library is important primarily with respect to the curriculum, and the service of the library should therefore be reflected in such tests as are being applied to instruction. The librarian, like the instructor, is primarily working through the curriculum. In so far as the curriculum does not come up to a theoretical ideal (and variation between individual students and student

bodies makes achievement of an ideal curriculum difficult, if not impossible), the service of the library is likewise in danger of being educationally less adequate than it should be. This may be true even when the librarian has wide latitude to fill in the gaps resulting from an imperfect curriculum (and hence imperfect faculty selection), for the library's book funds, and the librarian's interest must be primarily devoted to supplying the needs of the curriculum as it is.

3. All of this suggests the desirability of a study of book selection in the individual departments of the college. Such a study should include an analysis of the curriculum factors involved in the problem of selecting books which are not only intrinsically good but also well suited to the given department, the institution, and the students enrolled for specific courses. The study might also include a comparison of the titles selected by the librarian, by instructors at the librarian's suggestion, and by instructors individually.

4. Another study which seems to be indicated is one which would attempt to determine whether quality of library has any relation to, or makes any difference in, the education of the students in the institution. This would involve comparison of the reading records of students, their use of the library, the quality of undergraduates as determined by tests, and perhaps also an analysis of reading done after graduation if that could be secured. Such a study might be related to results of tests in several institutions, as well as to analyses of their curricula. By implication, the foregoing suggests the desirability of adequate, accurate records of student reading; such records are not now generally kept.

5. Along a different line, there seems to be a need for a thorough study of recreational, or non-curricular, reading. It is probable that librarians, as well as those concerned with the problems of the curriculum, have been too little concerned with this aspect of reading. It is also possible that when the librarian does think of extra-curricular reading he is thinking of about the same values which the student of the curriculum has in mind when he concerns himself with extending the curriculum to an

ideal which will really give the student a liberal education. In any case, it would be interesting to attempt to find out what kinds of books should be included in dormitory libraries, browsing rooms, on recreational reading lists, and the like; how much of such reading is really necessary to supplement the curriculum; and how effective the supplementing is. At present, the acquisition of reading materials of this sort is highly haphazard, and little, if any, attention is paid to their use or to an objective analysis of their real value.

6. Finally, there seems to be a place for a study which would show the average minimum amount which the liberal arts college offering the "normal" curriculum must spend annually for books, if it is to provide and maintain an adequate collection. There have been, of course, numerous suggestions as to what this amount should be; but even such of these suggestions as have been based upon objective analysis have not gone the whole way in providing for the two principal factors which make up the problem. The first of these, and the more difficult, has to do with the determination of what has constituted during the past few years, and what is likely to constitute in the near future, the book requirements for each of the college departments. In other words, what is a generous average for the number of books which art, chemistry, history, and so on, are going to have to buy. Once this had been determined it would be relatively easy to compute average book costs.¹⁶ A definitive study in this direction, if disseminated widely among the administrators of the small liberal arts college, might be instrumental in bringing about an amelioration of present conditions.

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¹⁶ Cf. William M. Randall, "The College-library book budget," *Library quarterly*, I (October, 1931), 421-35.

